



# BULLETIN

## EMERGENCIES AND THE "911 SYSTEM"

The advent of 911 emergency response systems has simplified the actions required of those needing prompt emergency attention to a serious injury, heart attack, fire, or crime. It is easy to remember, easy to dial, and requires no pocket change. Further, many communities now have enhancements (911E systems) that route calls to the nearest emergency response unit and display the caller's location on the dispatcher's computer screen.

This technology is especially helpful for those responsible for the emergency care of suddenly stricken athletes and spectators, whether in a gym, an arena, or out on the field. However, because systems vary from community to community, the desired rapid and accurate communication to gain vital care for a victim warrants pre-planning, established procedures, and practice.

Advance planning is needed for more than that reason. Cellular phones, for example, provide the advantage of immediate on-site communications. However, they also present an additional consideration to the local 911 or 911E system as they are mobile, working from a different system than dedicated phone lines, and possibly being relied upon at a venue outside the normal 911 service area. If cellular phones are to be utilized, this consideration must be part of these pre-planning discussions and subsequent staff training.

Further, even with the use of a 911E system, one should be prepared to tell the dispatcher specifically where you are located and to confirm the number from which you are calling. For one reason, it is better to direct them to the "2d floor men's locker room" instead of just a street address. For another, the phone number may put on the dispatcher's screen the central billing address for your phone system. In sports and recreation, posting the specific location and number with each dedicated phone that could be used for an emergency is good practice.

More information than this will be sought by the dispatcher, but all advance planning for requesting emergency care via the 911 system (or its equivalent where not used) starts with direct knowledge of how that system works in your community. Discussions with the local dispatch agency and emergency responders will ensure the mutual awarenesses that lead to prompt and proper action at the moment of truth.

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